

THE CONFESSIONS OF A WIFE

BACK TO THE WORLD OF FEAR—CONFESSION 194

When I came back to consciousness for a moment I was not able to tell where I was. It was very dark and only here and there could I catch a glimpse of a light—evidently a lantern carried by some one. These lights seemed far off.

Everything was chaos, moans and cries rent the air about me. I tried to move and could not. I heard myself calling for Dick, and then I realized, for the first time, that there had been a collision and that Dick was far away from me. I tried to move, but in some way one of my legs was pinned down. I wondered why some one did not come. I tried to call, but my voice was drowned in the general excitement and horrible agonizing sounds of pain.

In a few minutes, which seemed hours, a hand grasped mine and Mr. Sanders said: "Are you hurt, Mrs. Waverly?"

"I don't know know," I answered. "I can't move one of my legs and I seem to be just one bundle of pain."

"I cannot move, either," he said slowly as though with great effort, "but keep up your courage. Some one will surely be here. You see, we were the only people in the dining car, beside the waiters. I don't see where they all are now."

Just then one of the lantern lights came over toward us and we heard a man's voice, moaning and swearing in the same breath.

Some one called. "Come over here; there is some one hurt in the dining car." As he said it I noticed a line of fire crawling along toward us from the other end of the car where the kitchen was. My heart stopped beating, and I must have grasped Mr. Sanders' hand harder, for he said: "What is the matter?"

"The car is afire."

The man who was calling noticed it and sent forth a shriek that brought a number of men toward us.

"Here, here, help me, help me!" he called.

"There is a woman penned under the seats," said Mr. Sanders; "help her first."

"Come on, boys; there are a lot of folks here," shouted a rough voice.

"Bring some water quick—the car is afire and it will take a long while to get these people out."

The flames burst out, and I could feel their heat. The hand I had been holding clasped mine tighter.

"Don't be afraid, Margie," were the words I heard; "they will get us out all right now that they know we are here."

And then it seemed to me that I heard some one praying: "God save her! God save her! Never mind me, save her!"

"I don't want to burn to death, Mr. Sanders. Can't you put me out of the way so that I will not burn to death? Oh, I can't burn to death."

"Hush, dear, the men are here and will rescue you," was the answer to my plea. "And, Margie, I feel that I am dying! I have not told you, but I am so crushed that I am sure death is near."

I burst into tears as I felt his hand grow chill.

"Don't cry, dearest girl," he said. "I am almost glad to go, for now I know that you will always pity me through the years, for I love you, Margie."

"I loved you from the moment I saw you in the car. Tell your Dick this—he is a man—he will know that this wild, unreasoning love comes at first sight and, knowing you, dear, he will not blame me. Here comes the men to rescue you—it is too late for me—goodbye."

I lost consciousness and only awoke in this hospital bed with dearest Dick bending over me.

I tried to speak, but Dick hushed me with a kiss.

"Don't try to talk, darling. Just